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NEWPORT COUNTY

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F.A. CUP SPECIAL

Round One WYCOMBE v NEWPORT

A four page supplement



Now soccer is more popular than Rugby Union!

NOWPORT, with a population of 110,000, was a world famous stronghold of Rugby Union when the handles of Soccer emerged from the former Newport County A.F.C. in 1912. Nobody ever thought, in those distant days, that the town one day would become a serious rival to the glamorous rugby club. But in fact, Soccer is now the bigger attraction.

Founding the Soccer club appears to have been quite a casual affair. An newly-appointed chairman scraped a team together with only days to spare.

The first season was hard and that first season's record is still the record. Often the chairman had to go around the town on a Friday evening to beg money for the next day's travelling — and an even bigger scrum-half cost £700 in their first season.

They were due to start operations just a few weeks later, but the club's home, was rented; dressing rooms (plus a wooden hut for

the press) were requisitioned and the newly-appointed chairman scraped a team together with only days to spare.

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But they struggled from one crisis to another until the summer of 1932 they were back

when, in season 1920-21, the club's fortunes came in 1937 with the appointment of an unusual manager — Bill McCandless, as manager. Within a decade was to pilot the club to the top of the Second Division. One of their defeats, the biggest ever, was by 13 at Wrexham.

By the end of it the club was virtually non-existent. Somerton Park, the club's home, had been sold to a local entrepreneur who had gathered around him

small wonder that they were relegated at the end of their first season to the Third Division. One of their defeats, the biggest ever, was by 13 at Wrexham.

Newport's best F.A. Cup display came in 1948-49 when they beat Wrexham, then beat Leeds and Huddersfield before visiting Portsmouth, then top of the First Division, in 1950. They were knocked out 3-2.

Billy Lucas, who has been on the club's management since its debut as a player-manager for the club in 1962, has won several Welsh caps with Swindon and Swansea. He was the first to score in the big game when Newport were relegated to Division 4 at the end of 1968-69.

That's where they have been ever since, despite three successive applications for re-election between 1968-71.

Last season they celebrated their Diamond Jubilee as a First Division club, but their prospects of a chance of promotion by a fraction of a goal, Aldershot, taking fourth place by a goal average advantage of 12.

This success, together with Somerton Park victories over Rotherham (1-0) and Macclesfield (3-1) must rank as County's best F.A. Cup success so far this season.

Club officials remain quietly optimistic about the team's future prospects of a chance of a real challenge before the season's very much older. They are building on a good cup run to boost the confidence of the side for the future.

DISAPPOINTING START

AFTER last season's long promotion clifftop when Newport missed the Division III play-off by a fraction of a goal, County made a disappointing start to the season.

Not until their sixth league game did they register their first win — a 4-2 home success against Crewe which lifted the club out of the Division IV basement.

Top striker Willie Brown, who last season notched 16 league goals, failed to score in the scoreless sixth against Stockport.

And by time manager Billy Lucas had long since discarded a 4-2-4 experiment of all out attack, this policy proved something of a fiasco. Newport were just not establishing any sort of controlled authority in midfield.

As a result, Newport's problems this season have centred around an irritating inaccuracy and a sad lack of motivation. And the absence of Welsh under-23 cap Jeff Thomas hasn't helped.

Meet the Newport team

HERE'S a rundown on the Newport County players who will be turning out against Wycombe Wanderers at Park tomorrow (Saturday). County are skippered by the firm of Brian Godfrey, who leads the side from midfield. He is a senior Welsh international with 11 caps and has given good service to Everton, Preston, Aston Villa and, most recently, to the club which paid a record fee of £10,000 for his services.

DEFENCE
JOHN MACK (goalkeeper): Bristol City's previous experience with Bristol City, Shrewsbury and Grimsby, from whom he was signed on a free transfer in 1970. Settled down at once with the club and played in every League game this season. Missed a few through injury this season but is perfectly fit again.

STEVE ALLEWOOD (left back): The club's star defender. Was a 16 year old schoolboy when he made his League debut for New-

port in 1972 and produced enough potential to be signed by the Welsh national team. He has 17 caps and has been a regular in the side since 1974.

PETER PASSEY (centre half): Two and a half years with Birmingham, who won an England Youth cap. Joined Birmingham in January 1972 and produced enough potential to be signed by the Welsh national team. He has 17 caps and has been a regular in the side since 1974.

ROB SUMMERSHAYES (right back): Two seasons at Cirencester, then joined the club in 1970. Settled down at once with the club and played in every League game this season. Missed a few through injury this season but is perfectly fit again.

GRAHAM COLDRECK (right back): Local product joined Cardiff City at 16 and played 117 League games for them before joining his home-town club in 1969 for a £10,000 fee. He has been a regular at mid-field level, and was Newport's captain until injury forced him to give up the captaincy after 17 games had passed.

MARTYN SPRAGUE (left back): A 24 year old part-timer who joined the club in 1970. Made a big impression in 43 League games last season, then gave down a chance to join Fulham when Cardiff released him, and has been a regular in the side since.

LEON HILL: Locally-born, all-round sportsman who plays with equal skill at midfield or upfront, and has been a regular for the club since 1970.

ROBIN HARRIS (midfield): Welshman, signed from Cardiff in 1970 and has been a regular for the club since.

ROB JONES (midfield): Welshman, signed from Cardiff in 1970 and has been a regular for the club since.

SHAWN SAVILL (midfield): Welshman, signed from Cardiff in 1970 and has been a regular for the club since.

FRENCH LINE (midfield): Welshman, signed from Cardiff in 1970 and has been a regular for the club since.

P & O (midfield): Welshman, signed from Cardiff in 1970 and has been a regular for the club since.

SITMAR (midfield): Welshman, signed from Cardiff in 1970 and has been a regular for the club since.

AND MANY, MANY OTHERS (midfield): Welshman, signed from Cardiff in 1970 and has been a regular for the club since.

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